More 59.smith@gmail.com Dashboard Sign Out

Chiropractic History Blog

An interesting (I hope!) look at characters and events from the rich history of chiropractic.

Saturday, January 23, 2010

Dossa Dixon Evins - Inventor & Innovator



One of the most controversial moments in chiropractic history happened in August, 1924, when B.J. Palmer gave his Lyceum speech, *The Hour Has Struck*. In his speech, B.J. vilified the majority of chiropractors for their mode of practice, and also introduced a new instrument with the proclamation that if you claimed to be practicing chiropractic, you ***had*** to be using this instrument. The enrollment at the Palmer School dropped 90% for the five years following B.J.'s speech, and it was a major turning point in Palmer's influence over the profession his father, D.D. Palmer started. The whole controversy began with a relatively unknown chiropractor and engineer named Dossa Dixon Evins who simply wanted to improve how chiropractors assess their patients.

Dossa Dixon Evins was born February 13, 1886 in Blodgett, Missouri. Not much is known about Evins' early life, but he did attend the University of Arkansas and earn a degree in electrical engineering. In World War I, Evins worked for the Secret Service and developed a radio receiver to discover high-powered transmitters, leading to the capture of German spies.

Around 1914, Evins contracted tuberculosis and spent several years in a sanitarium to try to recover. Along the way, he became interested in chiropractic through San Antonio chiropractor Dr. R.S. Marlowe. Evins was interested in Marlowe's method of assessing patients, which involved him using the back of his hand to feel "hot boxes," which he theorized were areas of inflammation caused by vertebral subluxations. Around 1910, B.J. Palmer and Dr. James Wishart developed a tedious method of assessment called "nerve tracing." In this procedure, the doctor would use the back of his hand to feel for warmer areas, then would use palpation to trace the tenderness and pain away from the spine to wherever it would take them. Interestingly, photos from 1911's, *The Science, Philosophy and Art of Chiropractic Nerve Tracing* show in photos that these nerve tracings often followed the dermatome patterns.

Because of his electrical engineering background, Evins went about creating an instrument that would find these heat abnormalities in the spine, and due to his success with chiropractic as a patient, he enrolled in the Palmer School of Chiropractic (PSC) in August, 1920. While still a student, Evins continued to refine his heat-reading instrument, which he called the Neurocalometer (NCM), as well as inventing the first hydraulic Hylo table, called the Palmer-Evins Hylo.

After graduating in 1922, Evins moved to practice in Kansas City, Missouri, where he continued to work on the NCM instrument. Evins tested the instrument for about a year, then approached Registrar of the Palmer School, Frank Elliott, who helped Evins present it to B.J. Palmer. B.J. felt like this NCM was one of the most important innovations in the history of chiropractic, believing it to be objective proof of where the "flow of mental impulses" was being impeded by vertebral subluxations. Palmer, Elliott and Evins tested the NCM for almost another year before B.J.'s fateful unveiling of the instrument at 1924's Lyceum.

Evins patented the instrument in 1925, and part of the controversy surrounding B.J.'s speech in 1924 were the terms of selling the instrument, which was by lease only. The lease was relatively expensive when inflation rates are accounted for, involving a total cost of $2,000-$2,500 spread out over ten years. By 2010 standards, accounting for inflation, that's the equivalent of $25,000-$31,000!

Search This Blog

Search

Interesting Blogs

The Atlas of Life
Cara Main Poker Online Uang Asli Tanpa Rekening Bank - Awal thun 2000-an poker berkembang pesat sampai saat ini bahkan bisa menjalankan cara main poker online uang asli tanpa rekening bank yang memberikan ban...
7 hours ago

Recommended Links

- Association for the History of Chiropractic
- Cleveland Chiropractic College - Kansas City
- International Chiropractic Pediatrics Association
- International Chiropractors Association
- NUCCA
- Palmer College of Chiropractic
- SORSI - Sacro Occipital Research Society Int.'l
- SOTO-USA
- The Beacon - Palmer College's Student Newspaper
- Thompson Technique Foundation
- Thompson Technique Seminars

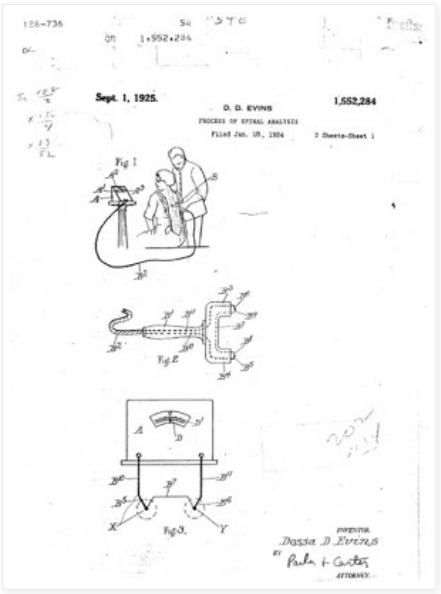
Blog Archive

► 2011 (1)
▼ 2010 (22)
► December (1)
► November (2)
► July (1)
► May (1)
► April (2)
► March (2)
► February (5)
▼ January (8)
1912 - The First Chiropractic-related Patent?
1924 Chiropractic Invoice
1940's On-Set Chiropractic
Flyer from the 28th Annual Iowa Chiropractic Socie...
Some New Material Coming In
Aleck August Wernsing - Upper Cervical Chiropracti...
Dossa Dixon Evins - Inventor & Innovator
Welcome to Chiropractic History



Unlike B.J., Evins weather the NCM storm quite well. By all accounts, he was a well-liked, humble gentleman. Evins wrote an article in the September, 1925 issue of *The Fountainhead News*, Palmer's newspaper, putting to rest many rumors about B.J.'s supposed mistreatment of him. Evins continued to develop medical instruments, musical instruments, and was even working on an improved x-ray tube technology when he passed away. Evins was also director of B.J.'s Central Broadcasting Company and was responsible for synchronizing the radio signals from B.J.'s two stations, allowing WOC to broadcast to a wide audience.

At some point, Evins and his wife, Billy, had been vaudeville entertainers, and "Doss" still enjoyed playing the English coronet. Because of his history with tuberculosis, Evins had scars on his lungs that would sometimes open up and bleed. As such, Billie wouldn't allow him to play the instrument whenever she was around. Billie traveled to Arkansas to visit family in 1932, and Doss took the opportunity to play his coronet daily, which reopened many of his lung scars. He bled internally for several days without knowing it, and by the time he realized what had happened, it was too late to save Evins' life. Evins died of pneumonia on November 15, 1932. Five years later, Billy remarried to W.L. "Laddie" Heath, Jr., Mabel Palmer's brother and an important confidante of B.J. in his own right.



Posted by Steve Agocs, D.C. at 10:54 AM
Labels: BJ, chiropractic, dixon, dossa, evins, instruments, NCM, neurocalometer, palmer, thermography

Links to this post